November 18, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Jeffries, and Minority Leader Schumer:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to work toward the enactment of the fiscal year (FY) 2026 Defense Appropriations Act, to ensure full funding levels for the Defense Health Research Programs, including the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP). We collectively represent millions of American veterans, military retirees, military families, and civilians who benefit from the ongoing research funded by the CDMRP.

Our organizations appreciate actions by the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations to advance their respective versions of the FY2026 Defense Appropriations Act. However, critical time for negotiating a final bill has been lost due to gridlock and the recent federal government shutdown. We are particularly concerned about the possibility of Congress enacting another year-long continuing resolution (CR) in lieu of a final Defense Appropriations bill. The FY2025 Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, enacted last March, led to devastating consequences, resulting in a 57 percent cut to CDMRP programs below FY2024-enacted funding levels. As a result, 23 of the 35 CDMRP programs received no funding in FY2025.[1] Another long-term CR would risk repeating or even worsening these cuts, undermining the vital research that directly benefits the health of the men and women who serve in the U.S. Armed Services.

Failure to enact the Defense Appropriations Act this year will have serious health consequences for millions of Americans — especially current and former military service members and their families — who live with chronic and debilitating disorders. Further delay will impede critical new discoveries and slow the translation of promising medical innovations into new treatments and cures that could greatly improve or even save lives.

[1] Programs that received no funding in FY25: Alcohol and Substance Abuse Disorder, Arthritis, Autism, Bone Marrow Failure Disease, Combat Readiness Medical, Epilepsy, Hearing Restoration, Glioblastoma, Joint Warfighter Medical, Kidney Cancer, Lung Cancer, Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis, Neurofibromatosis, Orthopaedic, Pancreatic Cancer, Parkinson's Disease, Reconstructive Transplant, Spinal Cord Injury, Tick-Borne Disease, TBI and Psychological Health, Tuberous Sclerosis Complex, Vision.

Each year, CDMRP engages in a rigorous process of strategic vision setting, proposal solicitations, and a two-step peer and programmatic review of applications to identify and fund the most promising research proposals. The CDMRP annually receives more than 12,000 pre-applications and 7,000 full applications for grants, which undergo both a peer and programmatic review to ensure that only the highest-quality, most innovative projects are selected for funding. Further delays in enacting the FY2026 Defense Appropriations Act will severely disrupt this process. Such delays will adversely impact the Department of Defense's ability to conduct thorough peer-reviewed scientific reviews of grant applications and timely negotiations to award FY2026 grants.

Failure to pass a fully funded fiscal year 2026 budget will also compromise the ability of research institutions and laboratories nationwide across the U.S to effectively plan, prepare and execute the highest quality grant applications. This uncertainty threatens to stall discovery-based research, destabilize critical scientific workforces, and weaken the nation's position as a global leader in biomedical innovation.

The CDMRP is a cornerstone of the Defense Appropriations Act, and failure to enact this legislation will have a devastating impact on these programs. Aside from the obvious biomedical and economic consequences of such actions, failure to enact legislation will interrupt important pipelines that have allowed investigators at U.S. medical research institutions to maintain our leadership as the best in the world as well as build careers and implement new and innovative medical research. Inaction risks halting the development of new therapies that improve outcomes, reduce long-term health costs, and save lives. It will also disrupt vital research pipelines that enable U.S. investigators to pursue bold, innovative ideas and build lasting scientific careers.

We therefore urge Congress to act swiftly and work together in a bipartisan, bicameral spirit to enact the FY2026 Defense Appropriations Act, ensuring that this essential research continues to advance the health and readiness of all Americans.

Sincerely,

ALS Association
ALS Network
ALS United
ALS United Connecticut
ALS United Greater New York
ALS United North Carolina
ALS United Ohio
ALS United Rocky Mountain

Alternating Hemiplegia of Childhood Foundation
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Brain Tumor Association
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Rheumatology
American Gastroenterological Association
American Lung Association
American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association
American Psychological Association Services
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Ophthalmic Trauma
American Urological Association (AUA)
Amputee Coalition
Angelman Syndrome Foundation
Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Foundation
Arthritis Foundation
Association for Clinical Oncology (ASCO)
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network (BCAN)
Blood Cancer United (Formerly The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society)
Cancer ABCs
Cancer Support Community
Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine
Celiac Disease Foundation
CFC International
Children's Tumor Foundation
Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
Coalition for National Trauma Research
Coalition to Cure CHD2
Colorectal Cancer Alliance
COMBINEDBrain
Connect Melanoma
Craig H. Neilsen Foundation
Cri du Chat Research Foundation
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation
CURE Epilepsy
Cure HHT
Cure SMA

Danny Did Epilepsy Foundation
Deadliest Cancers Coalition
Debbie’s Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer
Decoding Developmental Epilepsies
Defense Health Research Consortium
Dravet Syndrome Foundation
DYNC1H1 Association
Epilepsies Action Network (EAN)
Epilepsy Alliance America
Epilepsy Foundation of America
Esophageal Cancer Action Network (ECAN)
FDMAS Alliance
Fight Colorectal Cancer
Foundation for Angelman Syndrome Therapeutics
Foundation to Eradicate Duchenne
Friedreich's Ataxia Research Foundation (FARA)
GABA-A Alliance
Giving Tree Club of Rossmoor
Global Healthy Living Foundation
GNB1 Advocacy Group
GO2 for Lung Cancer
Hearing Loss Association of America
HIV Medicine Association
Hope for HIE
Hope for Stomach Cancer
Hydrocephalus Association
Ian Burkhart Foundation
Indiana University
Infectious Diseases Society of America
International Myeloma Foundation
Interstitial Cystitis Association
Johns Hopkins University & Medicine
KCNQ2 Cure Alliance
Kidney Cancer Association
KidneyCAN
Littlest Tumor Foundation
LUNGevity Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Lupus Foundation of America
Lupus Research Alliance
Lymphatic Education & Research Network
Lymphoma Research Foundation
Malecare Cancer Support
Massachusetts ME/CFS & FM Association
Melanoma Research Foundation
METAvivor

Military Order of the Purple Heart
Monica Weldon Consulting, LLC
National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research
National Alliance of State Prostate Cancer Coalitions
National Ataxia Foundation
National Autism Association
National Brain Tumor Society
National Health Council
National Kidney Foundation
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
Neurofibromatosis (NF) Midwest
Neurofibromatosis Network
NORSE Institute
North American Spinal Cord Injury Consortium
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN)
Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy
Patient-Led Research Collaborative
Phelan-McDermid Syndrome Foundation
PKD Foundation
PPP3CA Hope Foundation
Prostate Cancer Foundation
Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation
Rally Foundation for Childhood Cancer Research
Rare Epilepsy Network (REN)
RASopathies Network
Research!America
Shepherd Center
SHEPHERD Foundation
Society of Military Ophthalmologists
Solve M.E.
South Carolina Advocates for Epilepsy
St. Baldrick's Foundation
Susan G. Komen
TB Alliance
Texas Neurofibromatosis Foundation
The Cute Syndrome Foundation
The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy
The LAM Foundation
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
The Prostate Cancer Clinical Trials Consortium
The Sergeant Sullivan Circle
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons
The Sturge-Weber Foundation
TSC Alliance
Unite 2 Fight Paralysis

United Spinal Association
University of Cincinnati
University of Iowa
University of Rochester
Veteran Warriors
Veterans for Common Sense
VHL Alliance
Washington State University
Weill Cornell Medicine
Wings for Life USA - Spinal Cord Research Foundation Inc.
ZERO Prostate Cancer

cc: House and Senate Committees on Appropriations